



**Enfield Budget Committee
Public Works Facility, 74 Lockehaven Rd, Enfield, New Hampshire
Meeting Minutes November 7, 2017 6:30 PM (Draft)**

Members present: Dominic Albanese, James Buffington, Eric Crate, Fred Cummings, Mike Diehn, Sam Eaton (Chair), Mark Eisener, Shirley Green (Vice Chair), Nancy Smith

Excused: Holly West

Absent:

Others Present: Ryan Aylesworth, Town Manager; Annabelle Bamforth (minutes)

Administrative

Sam called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

Approval of Minutes:

James motioned to approve the minutes of October 24th meeting, and Shirley seconded.

Discussion:

Dominic noted that the minutes should include the committee's consensus of not disapproving two employees working at the transfer station at the same time.

Fred noted that he should be marked "excused" rather than "absent."

The minutes were approved with the corrections; Fred abstained from voting due to excusal from that meeting.

New Business

2017 tax rate review

Ryan expanded on his email that he'd sent to the committee about the new tax rate, particularly the disparity in revenue calculations that led to a larger than expected increase in the municipal rate; Ryan said that he learned that a TIF payment of about \$163,000 had been mistakenly accounted for twice on the MS-737 budget form. He added that the total tax rate is down, mainly due to the reduction in the local education portion of the tax rate.

Dominic asked if the email sent to the committee should be included in the minutes; Annabelle said she would include it when submitting the draft minutes.

2018 Budget Review

The committee reviewed a packet shared by Ryan about Avitar, which recently presented a demo to the town for its assessing software. Avitar also provides modules for utility billing, building permits, and tax collection. While conversion to Avitar for assessing purposes has been approved, Ryan said this handout details the other modules that Avitar offers. Ryan said that there are new costs associated with using some of these modules; he added that there is value to be found in these services eliminating duplicate functions performed by town employees and reducing human error. Ryan said he plans to recommend putting these services into the budget and will be planning to use capital reserves to fund the upfront costs.

There was discussion about BMSI, the town's fund accounting software. Ryan said the town is stuck with BMSI until another solution is available. Nancy asked if anyone local has used Avitar. Ryan said the market share is pretty big overall, and that he's not sure which other local towns are using Avitar. Nancy asked if Ryan could get some feedback from some of these other towns. Ryan said that would be the next step.

Sam asked if using Avitar would help with duplicate inputs such as this year's revenue miscalculation issue. Ryan said it's not clear exactly how that duplicate accounting happened. Sam asked about the protocols to help prevent mistakes like that. Ryan said that he plans on taking up the Department of Revenue Administration's offer to provide the town with a preliminary review, which is an offer that hasn't been taken in the past and would be a good step in identifying mistakes earlier in the process. Ryan commented that the town not allowing the DRA to find errors can make some problems worse, and added that in his process dissecting the revenues, it didn't take long for him and the DRA to discover the error.

Dominic noted that he has seen a number of recent accounting errors being discussed this year, and suggested that perhaps the town auditor can be of help. Ryan said a more intensive review may change the scope of the town's contract.

Ryan noted that he reviews accounts payable each week and requests regular expense reports. He referenced a manifest cover sheet that is supposed to track spending, and discussed the difficulty of the sheet allowing the town to effectively tracking what went where.

Dominic said that while he appreciated what Avitar offers, he felt BMSI is where the important accounting issues lie. He asked if there's a possibility to look at other companies that offer what Avitar does plus a better fund accounting service. Ryan said he has not seen companies out there offering this.

Town health insurance plan review

Ryan told the committee that the renewal rate is in and the town is looking at a 6.2% reduction. He added that the pool is seeing an 8% reduction, but the town's reduction is lower due to its claim history. The committee noted this reduction is good news for the budget.

Eric asked if the budget line for insurance includes new employees being requested. Ryan said that number has been updated, with new information based on a decrease in premiums and changing benefits, including transfer station employee adjustments; the new amount requested is \$563,900.

Other business

Ryan went on to update the committee about the full-time transfer station employees requested by the DPW. Ryan said that he took the committee's transfer station concerns, including the concern about two full-time employees, to DPW Director Jim Taylor. Ryan said that he and Jim compared the town's solid waste collection to other Upper Valley towns, and Ryan concluded that there is no more generous solid waste collection program locally than Enfield. He noted some comparisons to other towns, such as Lebanon's landfill being closed Sundays and Canaan offering no pickup at all. Ryan said he asked Jim to come up with a plan that makes sense.

Ryan and Jim discussed the idea of changing the transfer station schedule to operating 23 hours a week during the winter and 32 hours a week during summer, making changes gradually.

Eric asked if a traffic counter could be placed at the transfer station to help identify the best hours to be open.

Fred discussed a proposal he has been working on: having the station open one weekday a week and open on both weekend days. Fred asked for the committee's feedback on that idea. Ryan

noted that Jim's favored days are Wednesdays and Saturdays. Fred said that a traffic counter might show fluctuations during the weeks when trash and recycling is not picked up.

The transfer station is currently open 7 hours on Wednesdays. Ryan said there has been discussion about having two employees present on Wednesdays, two on Saturdays, and one on Sundays.

Fred said the second part of his proposal is looking at finding a high schooler to cover some hours during high volume months, if it's found there is more traffic at the transfer station. Ryan noted that he was told by a Primex risk manager that two employees are not required to be at the transfer station. He said that the solid waste personnel line at \$88,576 could go down to just under \$52K with these changes, and eliminating the two benefits packages for full-time employees at the transfer station has reduced the health insurance line.

Dominic said he had some concern about just one person on duty.

Fred said he will work on a finalized version of his proposal.

Nancy asked if revenue budgets were being put together. Ryan said this process is in early stages.

The committee was informed that the library and recreation departments cannot present as scheduled; the committee discussed alternatives to the previously scheduled presentations.

Ryan told the committee that about 22.5 percent of the budget is unexpended with about 15 percent of the year left. He said that he has asked departments to not treat unexpended funds as "extra" money and to only spend as absolutely necessary.

Next meeting: Tuesday, November 21st, 2017, 6:30 PM, Public Works Facility

Public Comment

none

Adjournment

Sam adjourned the meeting at 7:39 p.m.